

THE MOUNTAIN VALLEY CHAPTER (HEBER CITY, UTAH)

THE CITY NAMED HEBER AND THE MOUNTAIN

The two black-robed Franciscan padres halted their trail-weary and travel-stained column at the grassy bank of the rushing stream. The morning sun was only two hands off the eastern horizon and dead ahead, clear and crisp and deceitfully close in the rarefied altitude of the western horizon was The Mountain.

Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Francisco Atanasio Dominguez had, months before, set out from Sante Fe with a modest military escort in a great Spanish effort to explore and establish new missions in the vast unknown western interior.

The year was 1776.

The Mountain seemingly stretched its lofty summit from both north to south horizons. With the early-morning sun warm on their black-robed backs, the padres stood in awesome respect at its majesty. In months of blazing trails they had become somewhat inured to lofty peaks and primeval landscapes, but this magnificent mountain held them transfixed.

Its uppermost escarpment was girded by a sparkling glacier back-dropped by a drifting white cloud and the matchless blue of a western sky. The padres were entranced. Reluctantly, they moved on toward The Mountain. Father Escalante had, in his brief encounter with the wandering Indians, heard of a strange Indian legend of a sleeping Indian Maiden—he was certain he had seen The Mountain.

The Mountain and the broad expanse of the valley to the east would sleep for another eight decades. In 1825, Etienne Provost, a French Mountain Man and trapper, had reaped a harvest of beaver pelves and had left his name on a river and later the settlement of "Provo".

Several millhands from the Big Cottonwood Canyon sawmill, having Sunday off, hiked eastward, topped the Wasatch range and viewed, probably for the first time by man, the mile-high valley with the thought of settlement. The year was 1857. The trappers and mountain men had given little encouragement by reporting killing frost in any of the 12 months.

By the spring of 1858 Provo cattlemen had moved their range stock to summer in the southern end of the valley.

The spring and summer of 1858 brought several restless frontiersmen attracted by the lush green of the meadow lands and the pristine beauty of the rolling highlands. In July of 1858 the first survey was made for the townsite. J. W. Snow, the county surveyor at Provo, laid out 20-acre tracts just north of present day Heber City. During the late summer and early fall, the cattlemen scythed, cradled and stacked a winter's supply of hay from the sub-irrigated bottom lands.

An early explorer, William Gardner, had seen the need of some sort of a road connecting the valley through Provo canyon. In 1855 the Territorial Legislature enacted a measure, ambitiously empowering William Wall, Thomas S. Williams, Aaron Johnson and Evan M. Green to "construct a road from the mouth of Provo Canyon in Utah County to the Kamas prairie".

The coming of Alfred Cumming as Territorial Governor in 1857, escorted by General Albert Sidney Johnson and his Federal troops, understandably turned the thoughts and efforts of these settlers to other less constructive endeavors.

By the middle of 1858 the "Mormon War" had subsided just a bit and Gen. Johnson's troops were apparently peacefully garrisoned at Camp Floyd near Utah Lake. The pressing need of a road again presented itself. At a bowery meeting at Provo on June 6, 1858 Church President Brigham Young, leaving no possibility of misunderstanding stated, "A road up Provo Kanvon is much-needed and we want 10 or 20 companies of laborers to go on it forthwith in order to finish it in about 15 days so that you can go into the valleys of the Weber where there is plenty of timber...we shall need about 500 laborers."

The Provo Kanvon Company was formed by the next evening, and the 500 laborers went on it forthwith. W. G. Mills was appointed Project Clerk and Feramor Little as Project

Superintendent. Engineer Henry Grow laid out the grades and route. Engineer Grow was to later gain some prominence for his part in the construction of the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

The Provo River was first bridged near the mouth of the canyon in October — the 15-day completion schedule was apparently somewhat optimistic.

The Oct. 13, 1858 issue of the Deseret News described the bridge as "...substantially and neatly made and calculated to be of service for many years to the inhabitants of Utah County". The road was completed "before the snows fell".

All through the long winter of 1858-59 the 11 pioneer families of Utah Valley planned and prepared to once again pioneer new homes in the high valley then called Provo Valley or soon to be known as Heber Valley.

Spring came late in 1859 and it was late April before the 11 men with three wagons and oxen could leave Provo. The wagons carried implements, farm tools and equipment and high hopes of new homes in a new frontier.


The 11 families had agreed to remain behind until cabins could be
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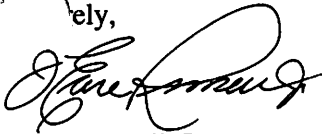
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CITY NAMED HEBER

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constructed. The sun had not yet topped 'The Mountain' when the venturesome group urged their little train eastward upslope following the trace of the road they had "completed" the previous fall. The Wasatch winter had all but erased their back-breaking efforts of a few months earlier. The 11 frontiersmen were James Carlile, George Carlile, William Giles Jr., William Carpenter, Jesse Bond, Henry Chatwin, John Carlile, John Jordan, Charles N. Carroll, Thomas Rasband and John Crook.

We hear from John Crook frequently during the subsequent years. Apparently Crook was a dedicated recorder of those eventful days. His chronicle reads "April 30, 1859, we camped at a snowslide in Provo Canyon that night. The next morning we pulled our wagons to pieces and carried them to the top of the snowslide which was about a quarter of a mile wide.

We thought we were the first settlers to arrive in the valley that spring, but when we reached the present site of Heber we saw two teams plowing north of us which proved to be William Davidson with two yoke of oxen and Robert Broadhead and James Davis with a similar outfit between them. We found that William Davidson had his family here, which I believe was the first family in the valley".

After a brief salutation the 11 moved on to a bright spring flowing about one mile north of the present Heber City. Crook notes it as being "the best land in the valley". Since they were in the majority and since most of the 11 were of British descent they named the spring "London"; they made their camp here and the name remains as London Spring. Losing no time, each man selected his allotment of land and quickly began to clear and prepare to plant.

In June 1859, the deputy county surveyor of Utah County, Jesse Fuller, laid out the town of London. The Sturdy log cabins were constructed from green cottonwood logs hauled from the riverbottoms and arranged in a compact rectangle leaving only space between each cabin for a guarded access to the inner-court.

With the seed in the ground and the new homes in readiness, the little party of men again made the three-day journey to Provo to unite and bring their families to the new land. That first growing season yielded nearly one thousand bushels of grain — a first rate start.

With a fair harvest of hay and grain there were now 18 families determined to brave the long Wasatch winter. Some less determined were to return to Provo, preferring the amenities of "the city". The first birth recorded among the colonizers occurred in November—a daughter of William Davidson and his wife Ellen. Appropriately the little girl was named Timpanogos — the Indian name for the valley and The Mountain.

The Davidsons were racking up a record of firsts. As predicted it was a severe winter — snow came early and heavy. For four months the colonizers were completely isolated from everything — not even a hermit trapper nor a wandering band of Indians appeared out of the vast whiteness; however, at Christmas-time an adventuresome group from Provo breasted the snow and the mountains to spend part of the holidays with the pioneers.

The Wasatch winter held fast and by the first of April the pioneers began to have second thoughts. Winter-weary and anxious to get about further building, but with no sign of spring, they gathered at the home of Thomas Rasband to seek the help of the Lord. Humbly, earnestly and sincerely in prayer they let their needs be known. It is recorded "before the meeting was dismissed there was water dripping from the eaves of the house and spring was born in the valley".

Summer came, and in June 1860 there were more than 200 people living in the green lush valley. Most of the "North Field" was under the plow and a bounteous crop was expected. As was customary, a community building was erected — church, school, dance hall and theatre, all combined. The building was completed just in time to observe the 13th annual Pioneer Day celebration.

Since many of the colonizers were of British decent and had been converted to the Church by the mis-

sionary, Heber C. Kimball, it was only natural that their settlement was to become Heber City. President Kimball was invited to attend the new city and the observance of the ceremony.

He is reported to have said, "Now you people have named your little town after me. I want you to see to it that you are honest upright citizens and good Latter-Day Saints that I may not have cause to be ashamed of you".

As the community grew, so did community problems. It was soon evident fences were needed to contain the animals. Fencing required some judicial authority and thus came into being an unique political official, "the fence viewer".

Autumn harvests were good, however, the old mountain men's forecast of early frosts proved accurate. The 1860 harvest season brought an enterprising pair, Smith and Bullock, into the valley with the first thrashing machine, horse powered and inefficient. Slow but stable growth soon began to generate confidence and well-being. Choir and dramatics groups were formed. Our faithful chronicler, John Crook, was chosen as choir leader.

More romantic activities were also taking place - on Christmas Day, 1860, Thomas Rasband, by ecclesiastical and judicial authority, united Charles C. Thomas and Emaline Sessions as man and wife. The first marriage to be performed in Heber City.

In the second ceremony, only a few hours after the first, Harvey Meeks claimed as his bride a Miss Dougal. They were married by Silas Smith at Center Creek.

In 1862, the first property valuation of the county was reported as \$48,350. In true frontier fashion, the independent spirits of the settlers did not readily accept the concept of property taxation. From the beginning, the burdens of the selectmen were many and varied.

In September of 1880 the Court House Committee reported to the selectmen that the construction costs to date were \$3,793.66. Upon completion two years later in 1882, the total costs were approximately \$4,600 plus \$250 for furniture.

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 funds were slow coming in — taxes
 were assessed but paid with little
 enthusiasm.

The tax collector's life, never an
 exceptionally happy nor popular
 one, is illustrated by his reluctant
 report and subsequent events record-
 ed in the selectmen meeting minutes
 "...taxes collected \$147.18 —
 taxes past due \$327.23." The
 following session of the selectmen
 meeting minutes state simply and
 succinctly "...a new collector and
 assessor was appointed".

By 1864-1865 many of the
 rude cabins had been replaced with
 substantial masonry homes of the
 fine red sandstone so plentiful in the
 area. Many of these homes are
 standing, sturdy and strong after
 many decades of service. Many are
 yet occupied by progeny of the pro-
 minent families of that harsh and
 austere period when providing the
 next meal for the family was
 foremost in the mind of the pro-
 vider.

The fact that the old names ap-
 pear and reappear through the
 decades on the roster of "Provo
 '77" is fair evidence of it being
 just a good place to live.

The Mountain, the sleeping
 maiden, the majestic Timpanogos
 may yet be viewed as Padres
 Escalante and Dominguez viewed it
 in 1776 — glistening in the early
 morning sun, magnificently im-
 pressive, bejeweled by the perpetual
 glacier, reflecting with solemn
 mystery the legend of two—plus
 centuries as eternally endless, time-
 less silence.

"Once again do I behold these
 steep and lofty cliffs, That on a
 wild, secluded scene impress
 thoughts of more deep seclusion,
 And connect the landscape with the
 quiet of the sky". (Wordsworth -
 "Tintern Abbey").

EAST MILL CREEK CHAPTER SONS OF UTAH PIONEERS

— D.P. Bartschi

**Deadline for next issue
 of the Pioneer
 is December 15, 1980**

FUND RAISING IN FULL SWING FOR NEW SUP BUILDING

Name to be inscribed in Plaque

Entered Valley or Born Prior to May 10, 1869

Date of Birth

Died

Where

Where

HONORS NAME

Current Address

Chapter Affiliation

At Large

Is or presently a member of SUP

GOLDEN ROAD

(continued from page 11)

Hoytsville, and Coalville to the
 mouth of Echo Canyon. Up to
 60,000 Mormon Pioneers plus
 additional thousands of soldiers,
 merchants, gold seekers, Califor-
 nians, and assorted "Gentiles"
 came down Echo Canyon to the
 Weber River. Most turned north to
 present day Henefer and into the
 Valley via Emigration Canyon. But
 some, including almost every
 important visitor to Salt Lake City
 between 1862 and the coming of
 the railroad in 1869, turned south-
 down The Golden Road to the City
 of the Saints. (See map accompan-
 ying this article.)

Since the new Headquarters are
 right on this old road, the S.U.P.
 might very well exploit properly and
 fully this fortuitous circumstance.
 For example, the trail could become
 an annual run sponsored by the new
 Pioneer Trail Relay Chapter, the
 road could be more thoroughly
 researched, marked, written up, and
 publicized, and part of the S.U.P.
 Library could be devoted to it. Old
 maps of the trail could be framed
 and displayed. On the grounds of
 the trail could be framed and
 displayed. On the grounds of Head-
 quarters an appropriate marker or
 monument could be placed telling
 the story of this old trail.

The Golden Road was born of
 Parley P. Pratt's desire to find an
 easier way into the Valley. His
 search commenced in late June,
 1848, but it was not until the 1850
 emigrant season that it was at all
 ready for travel. Pratt hoped, in
 vain, to recoup his time and money
 by collecting tolls. An ad in the third
 issue of the *Deseret News* (June 29,
 1850) recommended his GOLDEN
 PASS! or, NEW ROAD
 THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS
 and listed his tolls which ranged
 from "1 cent per head of sheep" to
 "75 cents per conveyance drawn by
 two animals."

(continued on page 17.)

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LOCATION: Heber City and Vicinity

SPONSOR: East Mill Creek Chapter

CHARTER DATE: *FEBRUARY, 23*, 1983

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